

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2907

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USDEL ASWAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0902

SECTO 130

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T A G I N F O

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJ: SECVISIT: EXCHANGE OF TOASTS AT SECRETARY KISSINGER'S

LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

KHADDAM, DAMASCUS, MAR 9, 1975

1. TRANSCRIPT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER' TOAST:

QUOTE: I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS THE GREAT PLEASURE WE HAVE
IN WELCOMING THE FOREIGN MINISTER, MRS. KHADDAM AND ALL OUR
OTHER SYRIAN FRIENDS TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. I HAD THE
PLEASURE OF FIRST MEETING THE FOREIGN MINISTER IN DECEMBER,
1973. SINCE THEN I HAVE BEEN IN DAMASCUS ABOUT THIRTY
TIMES. I AM ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT EXPERTS ON THE
ROUTE FROM THE AIRPORT TO THE GUEST HOUSE, AND ON THE
TACTICS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WHICH CONSIST OF GOING ON
THE ATTACK IMMEDIATELY UPON MY ARRIVAL. IN FACT, I WANT
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TO COMPLIMENT HIM. HE HAS COMPRESSED THE TIME SCHEDULE

NOW, AND HE CAN GET INTO A FULL ATTACK FROM A STANDING START IN TEN SECONDS. (LAUGHTER) I CAN SAY WITH ASSURANCE THAT WHATEVER ELSE MAY HAPPEN IN SYRIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS, IT WILL NOT BE DUE TO THE INADEQUATE DEFENSE OF SYRIAN INTEREST BY THE SYRIAN OFFICIALS THAT I HAVE ENCOUNTERED.

IN THE YEAR AND A HALF THAT WE HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF MEETING I HAVE LEARNED TO UNDERSTAND THE SYRIAN POINT OF VIEW, THE SYRIAN PRIDE, THE SYRIAN DEDICATION TO ITS PRINCIPLES. WE HAVE DORKED TOGETHER ON ONE AGREEMENT, AND WHILE IT WAS A DIFFICULT NEGOTIATION, I THINK IT BROUGHT OUR TWO COUNTRIES CLOSER TOGETHER. AS I CONTINUE THE AMERICAN EFFORTS IN THIS AREA, IT IS BASED ON THE CONVICTION THAT A LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST MUST INCLUDE ALL OF THE CONCERNED COUNTRIES. THIS IS OUR BASIC ATTITUDE IN WHATEVER CONTRIBUTION WE CAN MAKE TO LASTING PEACE. IN THE PROCESS, I BELIEVE THAT SYRIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS HAVE DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED, AND WE WILL TO WHATEVER IS IN OUR POWER SO THEY WILL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE. AS WE HAVE LEARNED TO WORK TOGETHER IN MUTUAL RESPECT AND GROWING UNDERSTANDING, I AM CONFIDENT WE CAN SURMOUNT WHATEVER DIFFICULTIES EXIST FROM TIME TO TIME. I HAVE GREATLY APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY OF WORKING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, GENERAL SHIHABI, AND OF COURSE WITH PRESIDENT ASAD AND OTHERS HERE. I WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE A TOAST TO THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE SYRIAN AND AMERICAN PEOPLE. UNQUOTE.

2. TRANSLATION FROM ARABIC OF FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM'S TOAST: QUOTE MR. SECRETARY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART I THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF MYSELF AND MY COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS OF THE SYRIAN SIDE FOR THIS GRACIOUS INVITATION TO THE RESIDENCE OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. AND I ALSO THANK YOU FOR THE GRACIOUS WORDS YOU HAVE UTTERED IN APPRECIATION OF THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SYRIA. YOU HAVE REFERRED TO YOUR REPEATED VISITS TO OUR COUNTRY. AND I BELIEVE THAT DURING THIS PERIOD AND THROUGH THESE VISITS YOU HAVE COME TO APPRECIATE AND UNDERSTAND WHAT WE FEEL AND HOW WE FEEL ABOUT CERTAIN THINGS.

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AS PRESIDENT ASAD SAID EVER SINCE THE FIRST MEETING, I WOULD LIKE TO REITERATE THAT OUR COUNTRY WANTS AND STIVES FOR PEACE. WE HAVE WORKED, WE ARE STILL WORKING, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARD THE REALIZATION OF A JUST PEACE. WE WERE VERY CLEAR WHEN WE SAID THAT PEACE MEANS TO US FIRST: THE PRESERVATION FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE OF THEIR LEGITIMATE RIGHTS; SECONDLY: THE COMPLETE WITH-

DRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM OUR OCCUPIED LANDS. AND IT IS FROM THIS ANGLE THAT WE VIEW EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION TOWARD A JUST SOLUTION, AND FROM THIS ANGLE APPEARS THE COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT A JUST PEACE. THAT IS WHY WE IN SYRIA AND THE REST OF THE ARAB COUNTRIES WANT JUST AND PERMANENT PEACE. AND IT WAS ON THIS BASIS THAT WE WELCOMED ALL THE EFFORTS THAT WERE SPENT WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK AND IN THIS DIRECTION.

I WISH YOU, MR. SECRETARY, AND YOU, MRS. KISSINGER, A VERY GOOD SOJOURN IN OUR COUNTRY. AND I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE AND ASSURE YOU THAT OUR COUNTRY STRETCHES OUT THE ARM OF FRIENDSHIP TO MEET THE ARM OF FRIENDSHIP EXTENDED BY ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN THE SAME SPIRIT. WE STRETCH OUT THIS ARM OF FRIENDSHIP TOWARD ANY COUNTRY WHICH SHARES WITH US MUTUAL RESPECT AND WHICH HAS MUTUAL INTERESTS WITH US. IN THIS CONNECTION, REFERENCE MUST BE MADE TO THE EFFORTS MADE BY DR. KISSINGER TO RETURN TO NORMALCY THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SYRIAN AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

FINALLY, I RAISE MY GLASS IN A TOAST TO SECRETARY KISSINGER, MRS. KISSINGER AND TO ALL OUR OTHER AMERICAN GUESTS HERE. UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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